

S O M E  
**REFLECTIONS**  
 U P O N  
**Mr. Ashton's Paper,**  
 Said to be delivered to the  
**SHERIFF.**

*Having accidentally seen a Libellous Pamphlet, bearing the Title, a Copy of Mr. Ashton's Paper, delivered to the Sheriff at the Place of Execution on the 28 of January 1697. Which Papers of late have been industriously scattered by unknown hands on purpose (as indeed what can be less conjectured?) to infuse an odd notion into the Heads of unthinking and disaffected Persons, that that Gentleman Died in a State of Innocence, as to the Crime for which he received Sentence, and was executed, (or that he was bound in Conscience to do what he did) We hope it will not be taken amiss that with submission a few Remarks, by way of Answer, are bestowed upon it, seeing it contains so many hard Reflections upon the present Government.*

**T**HE Paper tells us that that Gentleman was of the Communion of the Church of *England*, into which he was baptized, &c. and indeed We find him so far intangled in the new-fangled notion of *Passive Obedience*, and the *Jure Divino* Tenent, that he would have the World believe let a Prince in his Principles and Practices, be never so opposite to the weal and good of his Subjects; there is nothing but an unwearied patience on their side to sweeten their afflictions, and further tells us, That if the late King was guilty

A

of

of *Male Administration*, yet as God's Vice-Gerent he was Accountable to none but God, from whom he received his Power, and that none ought to take up Arms against him, and in this belief the Paper say's this Gentleman Died.

If this Tenent should hold, where is the happiness and safety of a People under a Prince who can make his will the Standard and Law of the Nation, to what end are Statutes, Courts of Judicature, or to what end the assembling of Parliaments, when the Prince is confident he has all in his own power and at his dispose, and that his Subjects have nothing to do when they are injur'd; but to refer their Wrongs to the day of Judgment, and prefer their Bills of Complaint to the great Tribunal, where he is only accountable, and what fears a Man such distant threats who fears not to violate a Sacred Oath solemnly made to his maker, and trample upon those Laws he has sworn to maintain. Our Religion, Laws and Liberties were invaded and threatned to be swallowed up by an unbounded dispensing Power, and then nothing had remained that We could have called our own; even our Lives, had they been given us for a Prey; had without the former been very miserable. It is held by politicians of all Ages, that where a King breaks the Bands that bind his Subjects to him, they by that means are freed.

It appears very hard and strange that our Ancestors at the vast expence of Blood and Treasure should leave us so fair a Legacy, or rather inheritance, as our Laws and Religion, that we should part with them for a trifle and voluntarily for a fond opinion subject our selves to a Despotick Power, and more, that Protestants should own such a Doctrin, when Papists themselves disown it. Look but upon the miseries of the Subjects of *France* since that Tyrannous Prince has incroached upon their Liberties, and then conclude our Case had been worse: Their Religion remains though their Liberties are gone, but in all appearance our Religion was the chief thing aimed at, for if the Popish interest grew so early ripe, as to Suspend and Imprison our Prelates, and try them as the worst of Criminals for doing their duty, setting up the Image of *Dagon* before the Ark of God, then think what a gloomy vengeance is laid behind, had not the hand of Heaven that sets up Kings and pulls them down, confounded the Babel they were building on the ruin of these flourishing Kingdoms. I might enlarge on this point, but this opinion doubtless was not all that weighed with this Gentleman, for it seems there was interest in the Case.

The Paper says a little after, *That he had particular obligations to the late King, whom he served, and had receiv'd many signal Favours from him for sixteen Years past*, and therefore could not but resent his hard usage (as he terms it.) This no doubt is the Snake in the Grass and the very Life of his severe resentment against the present Government, for Interest they say sways the World. The loss of his preferment upon the Revolution, no doubt, nettled him to Anger, his Cancel'd profits made him Cholerick, and in a bad hour for his Repose rendr'd him a troubler of our *Israel*, and indeed we find but too many infected with the like Grumbling on this score; however he would bear us in.



in hand he was constrain'd to Act what he did on the Account of Duty and Religion. This contradicts his Assertion, as to the Main, where he owns Kings to derive their power from God alone; for if God places one in the Throne, why may he not as well place another? And then being a Subject he ought not to have Conspir'd against the reigning King whom the consent of the People as the consent of one Man had set over them, and it has been held, that where the universal consent of the People Concur or center in a point 'tis taken for, *Vox Populi est Vox Dei*. David we find was anointed King whilst Saul liv'd, and therefore he was as much *Jure Divino* as Saul.

He tells us, *that all the new Methods of settling this Nation have hitherto made it more Miserable, Poor, and more expos'd to Foreign Enemies; And that the Religion we pretend to be fond of preserving, is now, much more than ever, likely to be destroy'd:*

As for the first of these, the contrary appears to all discerning Men, the people are Incourag'd to Industry now, as knowing what they get shall be secur'd to them by the protection of unbiass'd Laws; when in the Late Reign, we scarcely knew what Law or Right was, for by the same Rule, that Kings could dispense with One, he might have dispens'd with all the rest, and altho' the Change has brought a War, we find people more Cheerful in parting with some Mony to defend the honour of the Nation, than they formerly were in keeping it, when they Expected nothing more than to Lose all at one Clap; Either by the Plunder of an Insolent Army, most Commanded by Popish Officers in time of Peace at home, or by a *French* power design'd to be brought in to Enslave us; so that now those fears being banish'd, a scene of prosperous days is open'd, and more glorious things in prospect whilst Riches and Plenty are Link'd to our Isle.

That we are expos'd to Foreign Enemies may in a great measure turn to our Advantage, for an open Enemy is not so formidable, or at Least so dangerous, as a secret one; And all the Enemies we have got by this, is no more than what we had before: This is not the first Ambitious thought of *Lewis* the Fourteenth to Grasp this Nation, and perhaps he slip't those advantages by neglecting to send over his Forces in Eighty Eight (that he shall never be able to recover again) so that we may truly say, the Genius of the Nation strove against his pernicious designs and frustrated them, and for such feeble Enemies that Lark amongst us, no doubt, if they once but begin to shew their Teeth, the Government is in a condition to set such a mark upon them as they deserve.

As for our Religion it is no doubt now as heretofore, when 'twas threaten'd in Earnest, the peculiar care of Heaven, a house founded upon a Rock against which in vain the winds of Folly, and the waves of Malice beat; 'tis a vine that God's right hand has plant'd, and more and more Establish'd, as appears by its being rescued from the wild Bores of the Forrest that came to Root it up in great haste and fury, from the Little Foxes that attempted to pluck off its tender Branches; So that in this case, the Gentleman might have spar'd his labour

in threatening a Religion (but with what sincerity we know not) he pretends to be so much in Love with all, when Indeed he directs us the ready way to destroy it, when he Advises us to call home the Late King : But I hope we have but a few Murmuring *Israelites* amongst us, that after so Miraculous a deliverance desire to return again to *Egypt* though he would seem to flatter us to it, by urging the tender and Fatherly care the late King has for us, and Indeed that has appear'd pretty well in *Ireland* where all manner of Ravagements, plunderings, Imprisonments, and other Cruelties have been made upon those he call'd his own Subjects, of which we might give a Lamentable Account, would the space admit.

He seems to value his Life at a slender rate, that in this Cause he offers to lose Ten thousand lives if he had them, the Expression may in some sence seem great, but yet *Guido Faux* who was planted to blow up the King, and three Estates in Parliament, born up with the Merit of his Cause, tho a black one of the Superlative degree, was as resolute in his Expressions, and sometimes it falls out that men covet Vain Glory in death ; for we read that one *Josepb* a Blacksmith having drawn a great many unthinking people unto Rebellion, in the Reign of *Edward* the Sixth, to Re-establish Popery, or indeed they knew not what, he glory'd in his way to Execution, that for that fact his name should be recorded in History, and so handed down to Posterity.

In the same Paper he seems to cavil at his Tryal, and declare himself Innocent, when upon Tryal it appeared that the Treasonable Papers were taken out of his Bosom ; He says it was not proved he knew a Tittle of them, but the stress lay upon Suspicion, this seems however extraordinary, for if this Gentleman had not been privy to the Contents, or at least known them of dangerous consequence relating to the Cause wherein he Imbarqued, what made him so careful to conceal them, or what made the Plumet at the end of them to drown them if opportunity had given way ; these were of themselves a sort of shrewd Evidence, but not to stand upon such niceties which are at the same time made Apparent by his own words, when he says, *I ingenuously own the Premises*, that is by consequence tho his undertaking was not so fully prov'd (as it might be) yet he was as fully Engag'd in it as lay in his power, which his prayer and wishes for the late King and Queen makes out more fully. He tells us too of a Prince of *Wales*, and his confidence of his being the late Queens son ; but this single opinion will be of little weight against the common Vogue of the People, and the many objections that have been made against the possibility of it considering all the Critical circumstances that attended that Intreague carried on by the greatest Female politicks of Europe : And thus much as to what materially Occurs to be answer'd in this Paper that has of Late made some Noise in the City, tho at the same time we are Apt to believe it has brought over few or no Proselytes to the Cause.

FINIS.